



For Immediate Release
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DOE/NNSA Cites Los Alamos National Laboratory for Price-Anderson Violations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has issued a Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV) to the University of California, the contractor for the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), for violations associated with occupational radiation over-exposures to two workers which occurred on August 5, 2003, resulting from the inadequate storage and handling of plutonium residue containers.

The workers' exposures exceeded the federal annual exposure limit of 5 rem total effective dose equivalent. The PNOV documents the LANL's failure to develop and implement established work controls, to ensure that previously identified residue container potential degradation concerns were effectively addressed, and to store the plutonium according to the DOE/NNSA authorized process.

No consequences to the general public or the environment resulted from the cited operational event. However, the radiation exposures to the workers could have been significantly higher and were not limited by planned work controls.

This enforcement action is one of the more significant nuclear safety enforcement actions taken by DOE. DOE/NNSA has chosen to take this action based on the potential significance of the event as well as LANL's failure to correct long-standing nuclear safety deficiencies. LANL is exempt from civil penalty by statute and no civil penalty can be issued in association with the current PNOV. If not exempt, a civil penalty of \$770,000 would have been assessed, based on the significance of the violations.

The Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988 authorizes the Energy Department to undertake regulatory actions against contractors for violations of its nuclear safety requirements. The enforcement program encourages DOE contractors to identify and correct nuclear safety deficiencies at an early stage, before they contribute to or result in more serious events.

Additional details on this and other enforcement actions are available on the Internet at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

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